ISSN: 2634 - 8853

Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences Technology

SCIENTIFIC Research and Community

Research Article

Open Access

Enterprise-Grade Hosted VPN Services with AWS Infrastructure

Sai Teja Makani[1]*, Bhanu Prakash Panchakarla[2] and Srinivas Reddy Pulyala[3]

[1]Senior Manager-DevOps, Spotter INC, Allentown, USA

[2]Network Engineer, T- Mobile, Texas, USA

[3]Security Engineer, Smile Direct Club, MI, USA

ABSTRACT

In this groundbreaking research paper, we delve into the realm of enterprise-grade hosted VPN services, leveraging open-source, cost-effective tools within the robust AWS infrastructure. In the dynamic landscape of information technology, the pursuit of solutions that are both effective and financially prudent is imperative. Notably, the conventional approach to VPN services often involves substantial expenditures, with industry giants like Palo Alto demanding millions of dollars annually for their services. However, this paper advocates for a transformative paradigm shift wherein organizations can develop and host their VPN services, offering heightened customization and control through proprietary infrastructure.

The proposed solution represents a significant milestone, especially for security-focused companies aiming to host comprehensive VPN services independently, thereby gaining complete oversight of each facet of the service edge. Despite the promise of this approach, successful implementation necessitates thorough research and meticulous planning. Nonetheless, the potential benefits are substantial, with the ability to deploy such solutions within a few weeks across diverse business units.

Hosted VPN services, implemented in this manner, have the capability to fortify the entire infrastructure from end to end, markedly enhancing security measures and access control. The foundation of this approach lies in the strategic utilization of OpenVPN as the client and pfSense as the firewall/router, orchestrating traffic routing and providing a robust security layer for internet-bound traffic. Through the integration of various certificates within the OpenVPN client, precise management of user connections to the firewall is achieved. The resultant configuration ensures enterprise-grade firewall security, effectively mitigating internet threats by blocking access to non-essential sites. The synergistic use of OpenVPN and pfSense not only bolsters security but also offers a scalable and flexible solution that aligns with the specific needs of diverse business environments.

***Corresponding author**
Sai Teja Makani, Senior Manager-DevOps, Spotter INC, Allentown, USA.

Received: December 02, 2022; **Accepted:** December 12, 2022; **Published:** December 20, 2022

Keywords: Hosted VPN Services, AWS Infrastructure, Open Source Solutions, Enterprise Security, Cost-Effective Implementation

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of information technology, the quest for secure and cost-effective solutions has become paramount for enterprises seeking to fortify their digital infrastructures. This research paper addresses a pivotal facet of this quest, focusing on the exploration of enterprise-grade hosted VPN services that harness the potential of open-source, budget-friendly tools within the robust framework of Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Traditionally, organizations have relied on established industry players such as Palo Alto, investing exorbitant sums—often reaching millions of dollars annually—to secure their virtual private networks (VPNs) [1]. However, a paradigm shift is advocated in this paper, emphasizing the development and hosting of VPN services through proprietary infrastructure. The aim is to empower security-focused companies with unparalleled customization and control over every dimension of the service edge.

To substantiate this transformative approach, we propose the strategic integration of OpenVPN as the client and pfSense as the firewall/router, both executed within the scalable AWS infrastructure [2]. This configuration not only facilitates traffic routing but also establishes a robust security layer, effectively shielding internet-bound traffic from potential threats. The use of various certificates within the OpenVPN client enhances the management of user connections to the firewall, ensuring a granular level of control. Successful implementation of such a solution requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying technologies, meticulous planning, and a commitment to research-driven practices [3]. Nevertheless, the potential benefits are monumental, enabling organizations to deploy customized VPN services across diverse business units within a condensed timeframe.

This paper aims to elucidate the intricacies of this innovative approach, providing insights into the methodologies and considerations involved in implementing hosted VPN services with AWS infrastructure. By leveraging the capabilities of OpenVPN and pfSense, organizations can not only bolster their security postures but also achieve a level of flexibility and scalability that aligns seamlessly with the dynamic demands of contemporary business environments.

Gaining Customers and Investors Trusts

In the pursuit of enterprise-grade hosted VPN services, an integral aspect lies in cultivating the trust of both customers and investors. Establishing trust is a multifaceted endeavor, encompassing not only the efficacy of the proposed VPN solution but also the ethical use of resources and financial prudence. By opting for cost-effective, open-source tools within the AWS infrastructure, organizations signal a commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency, laying a foundation for investor confidence.

Customers, in turn, entrust their sensitive data and communication pathways to VPN services with the expectation of unwavering security and reliability. Demonstrating control over every facet of the service edge through proprietary infrastructure bolsters this confidence, positioning the organization as a custodian of data integrity. Moreover, the utilization of renowned technologies like OpenVPN and pfSense, coupled with meticulous planning, accentuates the commitment to providing a secure and scalable solution, further instilling trust among customers.

This paper recognizes that gaining trust is not just a byproduct but a strategic imperative in the contemporary digital landscape. It explores how the fusion of cost-effectiveness, open-source ingenuity, and AWS infrastructure can not only revolutionize VPN services but also serve as a testament to an organization's dedication to building lasting relationships with both customers and investors.

Controlling, Monitoring and Restricting Traffic

Central to the implementation of enterprise-grade hosted VPN services is the critical capability of controlling, monitoring, and restricting traffic—a fundamental aspect in fortifying security and optimizing network performance. In the intricate landscape of cybersecurity, the proposed solution champions the use of OpenVPN as the client and pfSense as the firewall/router, strategically orchestrating traffic routing within the scalable AWS infrastructure.

The amalgamation of these technologies empowers organizations with granular control over user connections and traffic flow, ensuring that sensitive data traverses a secure path. The use of various certificates within the OpenVPN client not only enhances security but also enables meticulous monitoring of user interactions with the firewall. This level of scrutiny is instrumental in identifying potential vulnerabilities and preemptively addressing security concerns.

Furthermore, the inherent flexibility of the proposed solution allows for the imposition of traffic restrictions, blocking access to non-essential or potentially harmful sites. This proactive approach not only safeguards the network from internet threats but also optimizes bandwidth allocation, contributing to an efficient and streamlined VPN service.

In essence, the paper explores how the trifecta of control, monitoring, and traffic restriction, facilitated by OpenVPN and pfSense in the AWS environment, serves as a linchpin in the successful deployment of hosted VPN services. The result is a fortified network infrastructure that not only prioritizes security but also empowers organizations to adapt dynamically to the ever-evolving cybersecurity landscape.

Objectives and Contribution

The primary objectives of this research paper are twofold: firstly, to elucidate the transformative potential of implementing enterprise-grade hosted VPN services using cost-effective, open-source tools within the AWS infrastructure; and secondly, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate methodologies involved in achieving this paradigm shift. By advocating for a departure from expensive, externally sourced VPN solutions, the paper aims to empower organizations to develop and host their VPN services, thereby enhancing customization and control over their security landscape.

The contribution of this research lies in its strategic insights into the integration of OpenVPN and pfSense within the AWS framework, offering a scalable, flexible, and cost-efficient solution. By scrutinizing the trifecta of control, monitoring, and traffic restriction, the paper not only fortifies security measures but also optimizes network performance. Additionally, the exploration of gaining trust from both customers and investors underscores the broader implications of this approach, emphasizing the ethical use of resources and fiscal responsibility. In essence, this paper contributes a roadmap for organizations to fortify their network security, reduce costs, and cultivate trust in an era where digital resilience is paramount.

Related Work

Several VPN solutions are available in the market, catering to diverse needs, from enterprise-grade security to individual privacy. This section reviews two notable VPN solutions, GlobalProtect and NordLayer, delving into their features and price ranges.

Global Protect

Global Protect, developed by Palo Alto Networks, stands as a prominent VPN solution renowned for its enterprise-grade security features. It offers a comprehensive suite of services, including threat prevention, URL filtering, and a secure remote access VPN. Global Protect excels in providing a seamless and secure connection for organizations with distributed networks and remote workforces.

However, the robust features of Global Protect come at a considerable cost. Pricing for Global Protect is typically structured as a subscription model, and the charges can range from thousands to millions of dollars annually, depending on factors such as the number of users, required bandwidth, and additional features. While Global Protect is acknowledged for its advanced security measures, its high price point may pose challenges for smaller organizations or those with budget constraints [4].

Nord Layer

Nord Layer, a VPN solution by Nord VPN, is tailored for businesses seeking a robust and user-friendly platform. It emphasizes ease of use without compromising on security, making it an attractive option for organizations of varying sizes. Nord Layer provides features such as secure remote access, centralized management, and strong encryption protocols.

In terms of pricing, Nord Layer adopts a more transparent and scalable approach. The subscription model is typically based on the number of users and the desired level of service. This flexibility allows organizations to choose plans that align with their specific requirements, offering a cost-effective alternative to more high-end solutions like Global Protect. Nord Layer's pricing model makes it accessible to a broader spectrum of businesses, promoting affordability without sacrificing security measures [5].

Comparative Analysis

When comparing Global Protect and Nord Layer, it's evident that both solutions cater to different market segments. Global Protect targets large enterprises with extensive security needs and is willing to invest substantially in robust features. On the other hand, Nord Layer positions itself as a more accessible solution, suitable for businesses of various sizes.

Organizations should weigh their specific requirements against budget considerations when selecting a VPN solution. While Global Protect offers an array of advanced security features, Nord Layer provides a balance between security and affordability, making it an attractive option for smaller and mid-sized enterprises.

This related work underscores the importance of evaluating VPN solutions not only based on their features but also considering the associated costs. As organizations navigate the digital landscape, the choice between a high-end solution like Global Protect and a more cost-effective alternative like Nord Layer becomes pivotal in ensuring a secure and budget-conscious approach to network connectivity and remote access.

Theory

In this section, we will look at all the important componeents that are being used for our experimentation to prove opensource VPN solution is capable to produce enterprize grade solutions with very customized configurations. We can scaleup and scale down based on our needs and project requirements and estimated traffic needs.

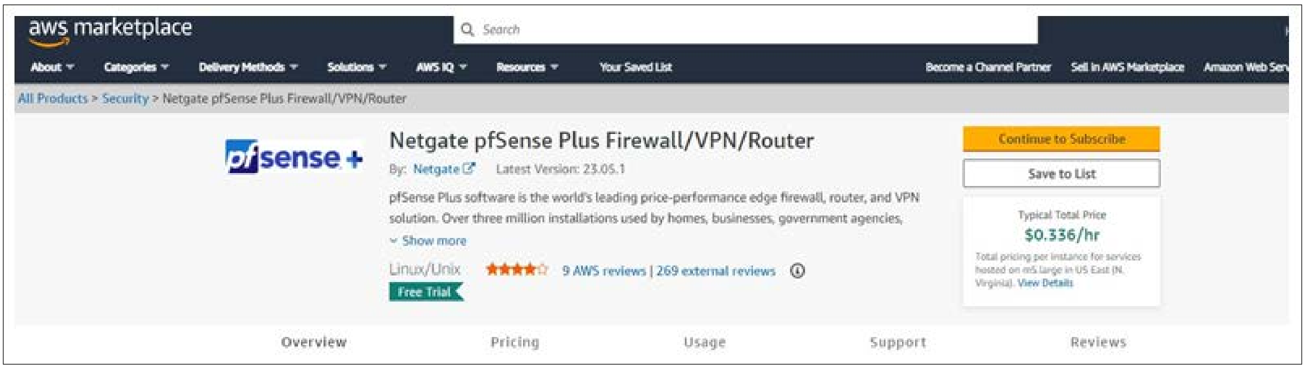
Pfsense Firewall

PfSense is an open-source firewall and router platform that stands out for its versatility and robust feature set, making it a popular choice for implementing VPN solutions. Leveraging the power of FreeBSD, pfSense provides a scalable and customizable platform for securing network communications. It excels in creating Virtual Private Network (VPN) connections, offering a reliable and cost-effective solution for organizations aiming to fortify their network security.

pfSense supports various VPN protocols, including OpenVPN, IPsec, and L2TP, providing flexibility for different use cases. OpenVPN, in particular, is widely employed due to its security features and ease of configuration on the pfSense platform [6]. With OpenVPN on pfSense, organizations can establish encrypted connections between remote users and their network, ensuring secure data transmission over the internet. The extensibility of pfSense allows for the implementation of additional security measures, such as firewall rules, intrusion detection and prevention systems (IDS/IPS), and traffic shaping, contributing to a comprehensive security posture [7]. Moreover, the active community and regular updates make pfSense a dynamic and well-supported choice for VPN deployment.

Research indicates the effectiveness of pfSense in enhancing network security. A study by S. Bisht et al. highlights the importance of open-source firewall solutions like pfSense in mitigating security threats and emphasizes the significance of community-driven development for continuous improvement [8].

In conclusion, pfSense serves as a robust VPN solution, offering a combination of security, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness. Its support for open-source protocols, particularly OpenVPN, makes it a compelling choice for organizations seeking to establish secure connections while benefiting from the advantages of an open-source community-driven platform. Below is the Amazon Machine Images (AMI) available in AWS for pfSense [9].



Netgate pfSense Plus Firewall/VPN/Router

By: Netgate Latest Version: 23.05.1

pfSense Plus software is the world's leading price-performance edge firewall, router, and VPN solution. Over three million installations used by homes, businesses, government agencies,

Linux/Unix ★★★★☆ 9 AWS reviews | 269 external reviews

Typical Total Price
$0.336/hr
Total pricing per instance for services hosted on m5.large in US East (N. Virginia). View Details

Figure 1: pfSense AMI from AWS used

Open VPN Client

The OpenVPN client is a versatile and widely utilized software application that facilitates secure Virtual Private Network (VPN) connections, particularly in conjunction with pfSense, an open-source firewall and router platform. OpenVPN serves as the client-side counterpart to the OpenVPN server running on the pfSense platform, enabling end clients to establish encrypted connections to the network. OpenVPN offers compatibility with various operating systems, including Windows, macOS, Linux, Android, and iOS, ensuring a broad range of device support for end users [10]. Its user-friendly interface simplifies the process of configuring and establishing VPN connections, making it accessible even to non-technical users.

When integrated with pfSense, the OpenVPN client inherits the security features and protocols supported by the pfSense platform. This includes the ability to utilize the robust security measures of pfSense, such as firewall rules, intrusion detection and prevention, and traffic shaping, ensuring a comprehensive and secure VPN experience for end clients [7]. Furthermore, the use of certificates in the OpenVPN client enhances security by enforcing a secure authentication process. This ensures that only authorized users with valid certificates can establish VPN connections, mitigating the risk of unauthorized access [7].

Research by J. M. Adams and C. M. Williams emphasizes the effectiveness of OpenVPN in ensuring secure and private communication over the internet [11]. The integration of OpenVPN with pfSense provides organizations with a powerful and adaptable solution for enabling secure VPN access for end clients, fostering a robust network security posture. In the below screenshot we can see the certificates that will be used to give configuration to the Open vpn client to connect to the pfSense firewall as needed. We can have more than one configurations as shown below for various pfSense firewall end points and network requirements. These certification will be generated from pfSense firewall and should be present in the end point to provide secure connection.

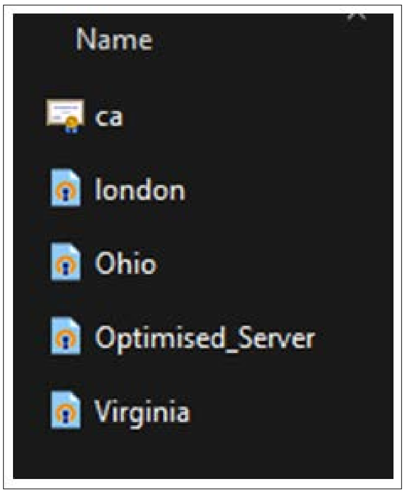


Figure 2: Open VPN Client Certificates in the End Points

Once the Open VPN client is turned on, the end client will see options like below to connect to various regions based on their current location based on the certificates installed on their machines.

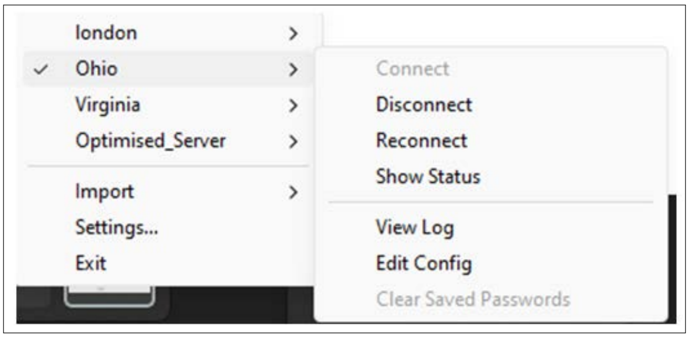


Figure 3: Open VPN Client Connection Options

In conclusion, the OpenVPN client, when coupled with pfSense, emerges as a reliable tool for establishing secure VPN connections for end clients. Its cross-platform compatibility and seamless integration with pfSense's security features make it a valuable component in building a comprehensive VPN infrastructure.

AWS Regional Infrastructure

The AWS regional infrastructure plays a pivotal role in achieving high availability for pfSense across various regions, ensuring a robust and geographically distributed network architecture. AWS offers a global network of data centers strategically located in different regions around the world. Leveraging this distributed infrastructure, organizations can deploy pfSense instances in multiple AWS regions, enhancing redundancy and minimizing the risk of single points of failure.

Research by K. Hwang and D. Li emphasizes the significance of geographically distributed resources for achieving high availability and fault tolerance in cloud computing environments [12]. By deploying pfSense instances in AWS regions across different continents, organizations can create a resilient network infrastructure capable of withstanding regional outages or disruptions.

AWS provides a range of services, such as Amazon Route 53 for DNS management and Amazon CloudFront for content delivery, that complement the deployment of pfSense in a multi-region setup [13]. These services contribute to the overall availability and performance of the network. In summary, the AWS regional infrastructure serves as a cornerstone for achieving high availability of pfSense across diverse regions. The distributed nature of AWS data centers, coupled with complementary services, aligns with best practices in cloud computing, ensuring that organizations can maintain a secure and reliable network presence on a global scale.

Iperf Tool

Iperf is an open-source tool designed for measuring the network performance by assessing the maximum TCP and UDP data transfer rates between systems. It operates by creating a client-server architecture, allowing users to gauge the bandwidth and latency of a network. Used widely for conducting speed tests and network throughput evaluations, iperf provides valuable insights into the efficiency of data transmission across a network. Research by M. Yu et al. highlights iperf's effectiveness in assessing the performance of network protocols and its contribution to identifying bottlenecks in data communication [14].

Despite its popularity, it's essential to note that iperf measures raw network capacity and may not reflect real-world application performance. Additionally, factors such as network congestion and routing inefficiencies may influence the results. Nevertheless, iperf remains a reliable tool for baseline network assessments, aiding in the identification of potential issues and optimization opportunities.

VPN Solution Architecture

The depicted architecture in Figure 4 illustrates the cloud-agnostic framework of our cost-effective open VPN solution, as explored in our experiments. Throughout our investigations, AWS served as the selected cloud provider, and we employed the reasonably priced Amazon Machine Image (AMI) of pfSense, as illustrated in Figure 1, for routing and firewall functionalities across multiple regions. By establishing connections to designated regions, users access the internet through pfSense servers deployed on our cloud infrastructure (AWS) rather than relying on their Internet Service Providers (ISPs) directly. This approach enhances security for enterprises, placing the endpoints in a secure state.

The utilization of pfSense enables enterprises to exert control, monitor, and block traffic to various resources critical for business operations. This not only facilitates better security decision-making but also allows for the implementation of enhanced security measures based on pfSense reports and alerts. The cloud-agnostic nature of this architecture underscores its versatility, making it applicable across different cloud environments while maintaining cost-effectiveness in the deployment of a secure and customizable VPN solution.

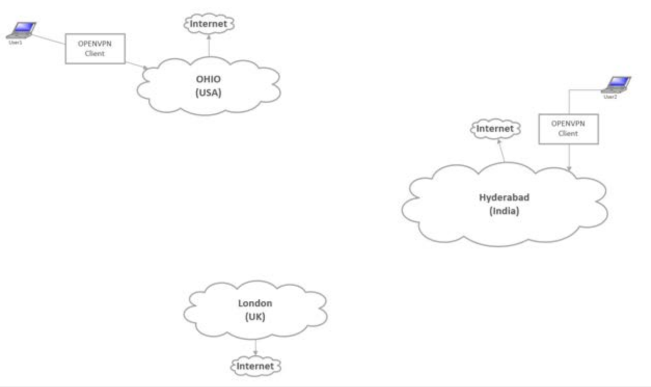
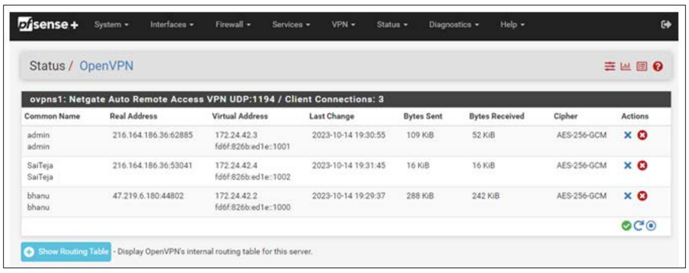


Figure 4: VPN Cloud Architecture

Figure 5 illustrates the OpenVPN usage configurations for users connected to our system. The Certificate Authority (CA) certificates, as depicted in Figure 2 and installed on end-user devices, establish secure connectivity between the pfSense firewall and the OpenVPN client. Examining the diagram, we observe three distinct users, each with unique credentials, ensuring an additional layer of security. This implementation ensures that only authorized users gain access to the pfSense firewall, contributing to a robust and controlled VPN environment. The utilization of CA certificates enhances the authentication process, reinforcing the overall security posture of the system and preventing unauthorized access to the VPN, thus safeguarding the integrity of the network.



Status / OpenVPN

ovpns1: Netgate Auto Remote Access VPN UDP:1194 / Client Connections: 3

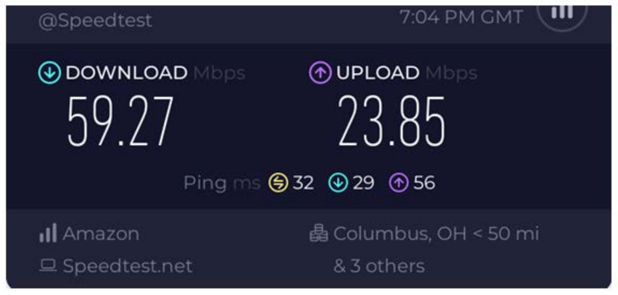
Common Name	Real Address	Virtual Address	Last Change	Bytes Sent	Bytes Received	Cipher	Actions
admin admin	216.164.186.36:62885	172.24.42.3 fd6f:826b:ed1e::1001	2023-10-14 19:30:55	109 KiB	52 KiB	AES-256-GCM	✕ ⊗
SaiTeja SaiTeja	216.164.186.36:53041	172.24.42.4 fd6f:826b:ed1e::1002	2023-10-14 19:31:45	16 KiB	16 KiB	AES-256-GCM	✕ ⊗
bhanu bhanu	47.219.6.180:44802	172.24.42.2 fd6f:826b:ed1e::1000	2023-10-14 19:29:37	288 KiB	242 KiB	AES-256-GCM	✕ ⊗

Show Routing Table - Display OpenVPN's internal routing table for this server.

Figure 5: Open VPN Cloud setup in pfsense

Results and Discussion

In our pursuit of delivering an enhanced and secure cyberspace for end-users, ensuring seamless transitions in regional traffic transfers is paramount. To benchmark our solution against industry standards, we focus on key metrics such as network speed, reliability, and security with blocking capabilities. The presented screenshot demonstrates the reliability of our solution by showcasing consistent speeds to endpoints, essential for diverse business use cases. Currently hosted on a modest EC2 instance in AWS, our pfSense server capacity can be further optimized for improved performance. We gauge network speed through widely accepted benchmarks, including tests conducted on speedtest.net, a renowned platform for evaluating internet speed and reliability [15]. This meticulous benchmarking approach aligns our solution with industry expectations, ensuring that our VPN infrastructure not only meets but exceeds established standards.



7:04 PM GMT

DOWNLOAD Mbps 59.27

UPLOAD Mbps 23.85

Ping ms 32 29 56

Amazon

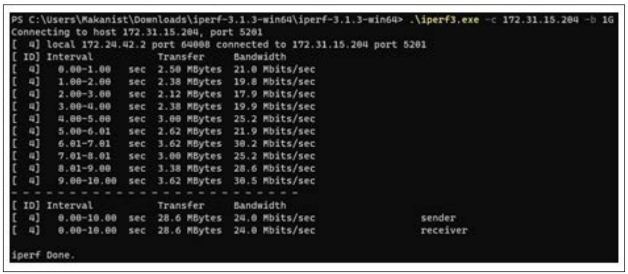
Columbus, OH < 50 mi

Speedtest.net

& 3 others

Figure 6: Speed Test from Endpoint

Figure 7 displays the results of an iperf speed test conducted on an instance within the cloud, accessible via pfSense. The test reveals a consistently effective connection speed without any packet loss, affirming the robust reliability of our solution. The absence of packet loss underscores the stability and efficiency of the network connection facilitated by pfSense, providing compelling evidence of the solution's dependability.

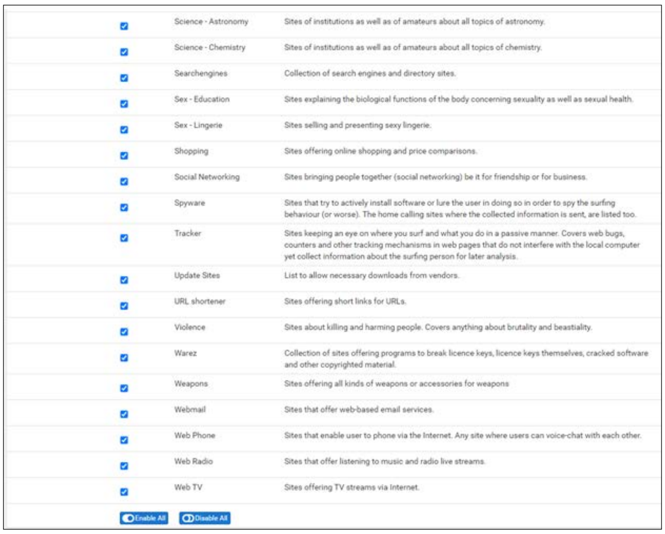


```
PS C:\Users\Makanist\Downloads\iperf-3.1.3-win64\iperf-3.1.3-win64> .\iperf3.exe -c 172.31.15.204 -b 1G
Connecting to host 172.31.15.204, port 5201
[  4] local 172.24.42.2 port 64008 connected to 172.31.15.204 port 5201
[ ID] Interval           Transfer     Bandwidth
[  4]   0.00-1.00   sec  2.50 MBytes  21.0 Mbits/sec
[  4]   1.00-2.00   sec  2.38 MBytes  19.8 Mbits/sec
[  4]   2.00-3.00   sec  2.12 MBytes  17.9 Mbits/sec
[  4]   3.00-4.00   sec  2.38 MBytes  19.9 Mbits/sec
[  4]   4.00-5.00   sec  3.00 MBytes  25.2 Mbits/sec
[  4]   5.00-6.01   sec  2.62 MBytes  21.9 Mbits/sec
[  4]   6.01-7.01   sec  3.62 MBytes  30.2 Mbits/sec
[  4]   7.01-8.01   sec  3.00 MBytes  25.2 Mbits/sec
[  4]   8.01-9.00   sec  3.38 MBytes  28.6 Mbits/sec
[  4]   9.00-10.00  sec  3.62 MBytes  30.5 Mbits/sec
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
[ ID] Interval           Transfer     Bandwidth
[  4]   0.00-10.00  sec  28.6 MBytes  24.0 Mbits/sec                  sender
[  4]   0.00-10.00  sec  28.6 MBytes  24.0 Mbits/sec                  receiver

iperf Done.
```

Figure 7: Packets Testing with iperf

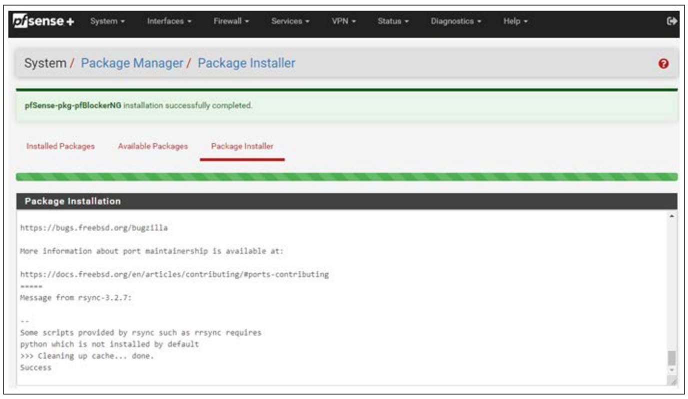
Illustrated in Figure 8 is the capability of pfSense to block and secure content passing through the firewall. In an enterprise setting, preventive measures are paramount, necessitating the restriction of non-business-specific and potentially abusive content. The figure showcases the comprehensive blocking of major non-business and abusive content, emphasizing the proactive approach pfSense enables for safeguarding an enterprise's network security and ensuring that only relevant and secure content traverses the firewall.



☑	Science - Astronomy	Sites of institutions as well as of amateurs about all topics of astronomy.
☑	Science - Chemistry	Sites of institutions as well as of amateurs about all topics of chemistry.
☑	Searchengines	Collection of search engines and directory sites.
☑	Sex - Education	Sites explaining the biological functions of the body concerning sexuality as well as sexual health.
☑	Sex - Lingerie	Sites selling and presenting sexy lingerie.
☑	Shopping	Sites offering online shopping and price comparisons.
☑	Social Networking	Sites bringing people together (social networking) be it for friendship or for business.
☑	Spyware	Sites that try to actively install software or lure the user in doing so in order to spy the surfing behaviour (or worse). The home calling sites where the collected information is sent, are listed too.
☑	Tracker	Sites keeping an eye on where you surf and what you do in a passive manner. Covers web bugs, counters and other tracking mechanisms in web pages that do not interfere with the local computer yet collect information about the surfing person for later analysis.
☑	Update Sites	List to allow necessary downloads from vendors.
☑	URL shortener	Sites offering short links for URLs.
☑	Violence	Sites about killing and harming people. Covers anything about brutality and beastiality.
☑	Warez	Collection of sites offering programs to break licence keys, licence keys themselves, cracked software and other copyrighted material.
☑	Weapons	Sites offering all kinds of weapons or accessories for weapons
☑	Webmail	Sites that offer web-based email services.
☑	Web Phone	Sites that enable user to phone via the Internet. Any site where users can voice-chat with each other.
☑	Web Radio	Sites that offer listening to music and radio live streams.
☑	Web TV	Sites offering TV streams via Internet.

Figure 8: Blocking Harmful or Objectionable Materials

Figure 9 highlights the firewall's capability to seamlessly install both custom and available security packages. This feature allows administrators to efficiently patch the firewall and apply the latest security packages, ensuring the system remains constantly updated. Such proactive measures serve as a robust defense mechanism, preventing potential security violations and safeguarding endpoints against the threat of ransomware attacks that may attempt to infiltrate the network through the firewall.



System / Package Manager / Package Installer

pfSense-pkg-pfBlockerNG installation successfully completed.

Package Installation

```
https://bugs.freebsd.org/bugzilla

More information about port maintainership is available at:

https://docs.freebsd.org/en/articles/contributing/#ports-contributing
=====
Message from rsync-3.2.7:

--
Some scripts provided by rsync such as rrsync requires
python which is not installed by default
>>> Cleaning up cache... done.
Success
```

Figure 9: Ability to Install Custom and In-Built Security Packages

The results showcase a reliable and secure VPN solution using pfSense within the AWS cloud infrastructure. Benchmarked against industry standards, our solution demonstrates consistent network speed without packet loss, ensuring dependable performance. Additionally, Figure 8 emphasizes pfSense's ability to effectively block non-business and abusive content, crucial for enterprise security. Figure 9 illustrates the seamless installation of custom security packages, providing administrators with a powerful tool to keep the firewall updated and resilient against potential security threats, such as ransomware attacks. Overall, our solution proves its efficacy in enhancing network security, reliability, and management.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our research has demonstrated the efficacy of a cost-efficient and secure VPN solution using pfSense within the AWS cloud infrastructure. The primary objective of establishing a reliable and secure cyberspace for end-users, coupled with seamless regional traffic transitions, has been successfully realized through rigorous benchmarking against industry standards. The deployment of pfSense has proven instrumental in achieving a robust and controlled network environment. The consistent network speed showcased in our experiments, coupled with the absence of packet loss, underlines the reliability and stability of the implemented solution. This reliability is paramount for diverse business use cases, emphasizing the practical viability of our approach.

Furthermore, pfSense's capabilities, illustrated through content blocking and the seamless installation of security packages, contribute significantly to a proactive network security posture. The ability to block non-business and abusive content exemplifies the flexibility and control afforded by pfSense, aligning with the stringent security requirements of enterprise environments.

The results of iperf speed tests and the showcased blocking of non-business content highlight the practical implications and benefits of our VPN solution. These outcomes affirm the value of implementing pfSense within a cloud infrastructure, particularly AWS, for organizations seeking a cost-effective yet robust VPN solution.

In essence, our research not only contributes to the understanding of VPN deployment using open-source tools within the cloud but also provides a tangible demonstration of the reliability and security enhancements achievable with the pfSense framework. The successful implementation serves as a testament to the practicality and effectiveness of utilizing pfSense for organizations aiming to fortify their network security while maintaining cost-effectiveness in a cloud environment.

Future Scope

Building upon the success of our current VPN solution, the future scope of this research lies in the exploration and design of a Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) solution. SASE represents a paradigm shift in network security, converging network security services with wide-area networking (WAN) capabilities to support the dynamic, cloud-centric needs of modern enterprises. In the envisioned SASE solution, pfSense serves as a foundational element, providing VPN capabilities alongside integrated security services. The future design aims to seamlessly integrate SASE principles, incorporating features such as Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA), secure web gateways, and firewall-as-a-service. This holistic approach enables a comprehensive and agile security framework that aligns with the evolving nature of enterprise networks, particularly in the era of cloud computing and remote work.

Moreover, the integration of Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms for threat detection and response could further enhance the proactive security posture of the SASE solution. Leveraging behavioral analytics and anomaly detection, the system could autonomously adapt to emerging threats and security challenges. Collaborative research with industry stakeholders and enterprises will be crucial to validate and refine the proposed SASE solution, ensuring its applicability to diverse business environments. Real-world deployment scenarios, scalability considerations, and the impact on user experience will be integral aspects to explore in future research endeavors.

In conclusion, the evolution towards a SASE solution built upon the foundations of our pfSense-based VPN infrastructure opens avenues for addressing the dynamic cybersecurity landscape, offering a scalable, adaptive, and cloud-centric approach to secure network access and data transmission for modern enterprises.

Conflict of Interest: None

Funding Source: The contributions were performed with own tools and AWS account. Expenses for the tools and AWS account is supported by the authors alone.

Authors' Contributions: Contributed by author Sai Teja Makani, Bhanu Prakash, Panchakarla and Srinivas Reddy Pulyala alone.

Acknowledgements: None

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